

Collateral damage of an intelligent mind

Jake Benson

3rd Year Medical Student
School of Medicine
University of Auckland

Jake is a 21 year old, third-year medical student at the University of Auckland, embarking on his first year as a clinical student at Waikato Hospital in 2017. He endeavours to approach this next stage with an open-mind as he continues to explore the range of medical disciplines. When he is not studying, you will find him procrastinating by re-watching House episodes, while avidly fighting to justify that their medical-relevance qualifies them as a learning resource.

This poem was inspired during our weekly small-group activities as part of the University of Auckland MBChB curriculum, where we were introduced to the concept of Mindfulness and tasked with reflecting on our own well-being in a 'SAFE-DRS Journal'. Our first entry to the journal was related to Changing Self-Awareness and Behaviour, our second about Health Behaviour Change and our final entry focused on Stress and Mind-Body Connection.

Starting with a stimulus,
my stress response begins,
strength oozing on the outside,
fragility within.

A once free flowing mind,
threatened by fixation,
anything irrelevant,
forced on vacation.

Palms begin to sweat,
heart begins to race,
my state is free to see,
with this crimson glowing face.

Sun rays diffuse,
and are then made small,
problem remains,
settling long-haul.

Behaviours change,
take a turn for the worse,
diet and exercise,
in the back of a hearse.

I know that I'm vulnerable,
thoughts run rancid,
small lump on my skin,
and I'm dying of cancer.

I am slowly evolving,
mechanisms to cope,
jotting obsessive thoughts,
gives me some hope.

When down on paper,
irrationality exposed,
I see for myself,
molehills misdiagnosed.

My minds got me far,
I never want to be wordless,
so for that I'll keep working,
on scratching the surface.

Emancipating my mind,
a transient state of Zen,
waiting for a thought virus,
to inoculate again.